Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in respect of ECR (Emigration Clearance Required) countries, the number of persons who had obtained emigration clearances for going abroad for employment during the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 where 3.68 lakhs, 4.66 lakhs; and 4.75 lakhs respectively. Their category-wise break-up is, however, not available.

(b) Emigration Act, 1983 does not provide for any facilities to be extended to the persons looking for employment abroad.

Pension Scheme in various sectors

1185. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only about 11 per cent of the total population of our country is covered by a proper pension scheme and large number of people are not covered by pensions, so far:

(b) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(c) the details of the steps taken or proposed to be taken for increasing coverage of pension scheme in various fields?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): (a) Retirement Benefits in one form or the other are available to only 13% of the working population of the country.

(b) and (c) Government has already implemented a new restructured defined contribution pension scheme, namely, the New Pension System (NPS) for all Central Government recruits (excluding Armed Forces, in the first stage) with effect from 01.01.2004. The NPS will also be available on a voluntary basis to all persons including self-employed professionals and other in the unorganized sector. State Governments may also opt to join the new system as and when they desire.

As regard to Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 benefits of Pension are available to all the eligible employees of an establishment to which the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous provisions Act, 1952 applies.

As on 31.03.2004 there were 280.90 lakh members under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995.